In Ortega, E. & Ulgiati, S. (editors): Proceedings of IV Biennial International Workshop "Advances in Energy Studies". Unicamp, Campinas, SP, Brazil. June 16-19, 2004. Pages 419-427

SOLAR AND WIND RESOURCES DATABASE TO SUPPORT ENERGY POLICY AND INVESTIMENTS IN SOUTH AMERICA

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ABSTRACT

The third IPCC report concluded that alternative energy sources should be inserted into the energy matrix globally over the next 20 years to reverse the increasing trend of worldwide greenhouse gas emissions to the atmosphere. The mid and long-range energy planning require reliable information on natural resources focusing on the renewable energy policy and investments. Two initiatives coordinated by INPE are under development to produce reliable information on the national solar and wind energy resources. The SONDA project is financed by FINEP to assist Brazilian government at decision-level in supporting and evaluating the multiple actions in renewable energy utilization. The main task in this project is the establishment of a national network of environmental data acquisition aiming at providing high confidence data of interest to the energy sector. The SWERA project is an international project financed with GEF/UNEP funds which aims at providing a consistent and easily accessible database to increase confidence levels at decision centers in order to foster the insertion of renewable energies on the energy matrix in developing countries. The wind and solar energy resources database generated by SWERA project will be put together with socio-economic and infrastructure data for the Brazilian territory in a geographic information system (GIS) toolkit for preliminary economic and environmental analysis leading to the implementation of new solar and wind energy projects in Brazil. Both project databases will also allow for a better understanding on how renewable energy and climate are related to each other in Brazil, and how climate changes would impact on these renewable energy resources.

1. INTRODUCTION

Modern lifestyles demand continuous and reliable supply of energy. It is in the heart of our prosperity and it is linked to everyday activities such as transport, feeding habits, and our comfort (healthy care, leisure, education, etc). The human development is strongly related with the per capita consumption of energy and, as a consequence of improvement of the life quality in the developing countries, it is expected an annual growth of the energy demand of 4% in those countries, i.e. a duplication in the next 20 years [1]. It is possible to establish a cause/effect relation linking energy use and development with environmental damage as has been demonstrated by many researches. The third IPCC [2] report confirmed that the Earth's climate is changing mainly as a result of energy-demanding human activities, mainly from fossil fuel energy usage. The increase in energy demand, the reduction of the supply of conventional fuels caused by political crises in producing areas, and the growing concern with the preservation of the environment lead to the necessity of a sound survey for alternative energy resources. The IPCC report stated that alternative energy sources should be implemented over the next 20 years to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions [3].

Significant business opportunities will result from near term potential for renewable energy and related new industries. Investors, risk capital enterprises, and independent

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energy producers may not be aware of the available renewable energy options. The mid and long-range energy planning require reliable information on many natural resources focusing the renewable energy policy. Without reliable information about existing resources, potential investors tend to avoid the risk of activities dealing with the development of solar and wind energy projects. The main barriers to investments in renewable energy production are:

1) *Technological* – most renewable energies options such as solar and wind are unstable. That is, the energy supply is controlled by climate and meteorology and thus, bears the same unstable characteristics. The technical challenge here is for the development of new storage and energy distributions systems/processes to minimize this instability in energy supply;
2) *Price* – Price for most renewable energies, for instance solar and wind, are often not competitive in the energy market so far, except in particular cases such as to bring energy to remote areas far from distribution lines. It is expected that with the development of new markets for renewables the price will tend level off in more competitive levels;
3) *Information* - Information barrier includes:
    a) the lack of reliable assessment of in-country renewable energy resource potentials,
    b) the lack of long time series of ground data with adequate space distribution for studies of uncertainties and time trends,
    c) the limited knowledge of the variability and confidence levels linked to several natural and non-natural variables such as climate, topography and man-made impacts in environment,
    d) the need for geographically-integrated data base such as population, energy demand, grid distribution, local access, social and economic data, etc.

Brazil has high solar irradiation levels along all year round due to its location in the inter-tropical zone [4,5]. Furthermore, the trade wind regime caused by the high pressure system of the equatorial Atlantic Ocean impinges the coastal areas of the Brazilian northeast states and make this region highly valuable for wind farming. The use of solar and wind sources of energy will bring several benefits to this country in the long term by bringing the benefits of electricity to settlements located in remote areas like in the Amazon region, regulating energy production during dry season in Central and Northeast regions of Brazil, and reducing the fossil fuels dependence and emission of greenhouse gases to the atmosphere [6].

Several studies were developed in Brazil to provide reliable data for the assessment of wind and solar energy resources. Tiba *et al.* (2000) presents solar maps for global diffuse and direct normal irradiance and sunshine duration based upon historical databases. Two computational models, BRASIL-SR and GL, are being developed throughout the last decade in Brazil to estimate surface solar irradiance using satellite data [7,8,9]. The BRASIL-SR model was used to produce the first Solar Atlas for Brazil derived from satellite data (Colle and Pereira, 1998). The former wind energy Atlas for Brazilian territory was produced by Brazilian Centre for Research in Electricity (CEPEL) using regional climate models [10].

Despite these efforts, there is a need to compile all these contributions, altogether dispersed, into a single readily accessible database, along with other important information necessary to adequately provide a valuable tool to develop new solar and

wind energy projects in Brazil. Currently, the Centre for Weather Forecast and Climatic Studies of Brazilian Institute for Space Research (CPTEC/INPE) are coordinating two projects which aim at providing a consistent and easily accessible climatic and renewable energy database to overcome the information barriers and to foster the insertion of renewable energies on the Brazilian energy matrix.

The Solar and Wind Energy Resource Assessment project (SWERA) is a multinational project financed by United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP), with co-financing by the Global Environmental Facility (GEF). The project includes the efforts of several countries, but is primarily directed to developing countries [11]. The second project is called SONDA (Brazilian Depository System of Environmental Data for the energy sector) and its main objective is to supply the country with high quality and reliable measurement network to provide ground-truth data for validation step of estimates obtained from satellite-derived models employed in the assessment of solar and wind energy [12].

2. SWERA PROJECT

The "Solar and Wind Resource Assessment" (SWERA) project aims at fostering the insertion of renewable energies on the energy matrix of developing countries. There are thirteen countries involved in this pilot phase of the project and they are divided into 3 great regional groups: Africa, Latin America and Asia. In Latin America there are six countries participating in the leading phase of the project: Brazil, Cuba, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua, Belize. The Center for Weather Forecast and Climatic Studies (CPTEC) belonging to the Brazilian Institute for Space Research (INPE) is coordinating the SWERA activities in Brazil. The Solar Energy Laboratory of University of Santa Catarina (LABSOLAR/UFSC), the Brazilian Center of Wind Energy (CBEE) and Brazilian Center for Research in Electricity (CEPEL) are partners involved with SWERA activities in Brazil and they are working together to develop several products and tools.
The main objectives of SWERA are:

- To provide a set of consistent, reliable, verifiable, and accessible data sets for international and in-country investors and other stakeholders such as government agencies responsible for facilitating clean energy development. In some countries, large-area high-resolution wind and solar resource mapping is expected to reveal far larger commercial wind and solar project development potential than currently thought possible;
- To reduce uncertainties associated with investment and development decisions for solar and wind projects. This will in turn decrease uncertainties in the design, cost, and performance of solar and wind systems, and should increase investor confidence, and confidence of key stakeholders;
- To increase awareness by key stakeholders and decision makers of the solar and wind resources and the relevance of the resource information to the development and deployment of various solar and wind technologies (existence of potential resource, inclusion of solar and wind energy technologies in energy planning);
- To increase capacity for making solar and wind energy plans on the local, national, and regional levels. The availability of the solar and wind resource data and training in the use of the tools to make use of the data will facilitate better planning for solar and/or wind energy development.

Table 1 shows the main SWERA activities developed under INPE's coordination. The SWERA project in Brazil is now in its final stage. The national wind assessment has been provided by the Brazilian Center for Research in Electricity (CEPEL), and the Brazilian Center for Wind Energy, along with the collaboration of INPE trough the SONDA project.

The LABSOLAR/UFSC and INPE are working together to produce solar energy resources maps for Brazil and for South America using the BRASIL-SR radiative transfer model [5,6,8,9]. The solar irradiation maps are being calculated from satellite images of geo-stationary satellites (GOES-8 and GOES-12). In addition to global solar irradiation maps, maps of direct and diffused components are also being generated as well as irradiation values for tilted surfaces. All of these were validated using the surface database provided by measurements stations operating throughout Brazilian territory. The surface database includes the basic climactic data (temperature, relative humidity and air pressure) needed as input data for BRASIL-SR model. The SONDA project is now improving and extending the ground measurement sites network which is essential to produce high quality input data and to provide reliable measurements to validate the radiative transfer model.

The cross validation of solar models is now completed and BRASIL-SR model has presented a performance comparable or better than other core radiative models used within the SWERA project after fine tuning to the major Brazilian environments: SUNY model, DLR model and NREL model [11,13].

Table 1. Activities developed by Regional Agency for Latin America in SWERA Project

Task	**Short description**
Develop maps and receive incremental capacity building in assessment techniques in partnership with SWERA's team	Develop BRASIL-SR radiative transfer model, generate solar and wind high resolution maps derived from satellite data, generate time-series data for TMY, coordinate regional review of existing national solar and wind surveys and assessment methods, cross-model and model validation for wind and solar assessment
Assist SWERA team in developing geospatial datasets	Identify in-country partners based on the ability to implement the GIS component of the project
Dissemination of SWERA products and outreach to investors	Assist UNEP team in establishing the global archives data sets and technical notes, assist UNEP/GRID in establishing the renewable energy database and help distributing SWERA's products
Provide capacity building in use of resource maps and tools	Work with partners to put forward case studies in energy planning, assist UNEP in marketing and presentation of the alternative energy development projections to investors

In various situations, only the monthly averages of daily totals are not sufficient to obtain the desired results in the proposed application, therefore, hourly series of solar irradiation and wind velocity data will be generated for a few selected points. These series, known as TMY's (Typical Meteorological Year), will be developed in partnership with NREL (National Renewable Energy Laboratory). Long-term series of surface data supplied by NREL will be associated with short-term series of satellite images, thus creating the possibility to generate TMY's for any location.

Regional data files containing model input GIS formatted data necessary for the implementation of national and regional charts of solar and wind energy resources are being assembled and processed. A GIS toolkit has been developed by the SWERA partners and it aims at bringing together data from several energy resources, socio-economic, and infrastructure information for the Brazilian territory. It is a GIS tool where solar and aeolic energy resources maps can be compared or overlapped with all sort of socio-economic information like population distribution, per capita income, maps of railroads, rivers, roads, distribution lines of electricity, industry locations, power plants (nuclear, hydroelectric and others), most of it of restricted distribution. The GIS toolkit will allow the study and delineation of possible scenarios for solar and wind energy utilization to illustrate the benefits of renewable energy in our energy matrix. It will also be useful to develop methodologies in order to retrieve useful information for devising incentive policies for renewable energy usage.

Figure 1 is an example of two outputs of the GIS tool developed in SWERA project. Figure 1 (A) shows the annual mean wind power density in the Brazilian territory. Areas with highest potential are located mainly in northeast coastal region, the South and Central region of the country. The areas more than 100km far from major electricity transmission lines and wind power density larger than 200W/m^2 are presented in Figure 1(B). The global solar irradiation map for November 2000 is shown in Figure 1(C). The colored areas presented in Figure 1(D) represent the regions with solar irradiation larger than 5.5kWh/m^2/day and distant more than 100km far from major roads. Queries like these examples are suitable for decision makers in defining national policies for investments in new energy projects since they are distant of the highways raising the costs or hindering of the fossil fuel transport

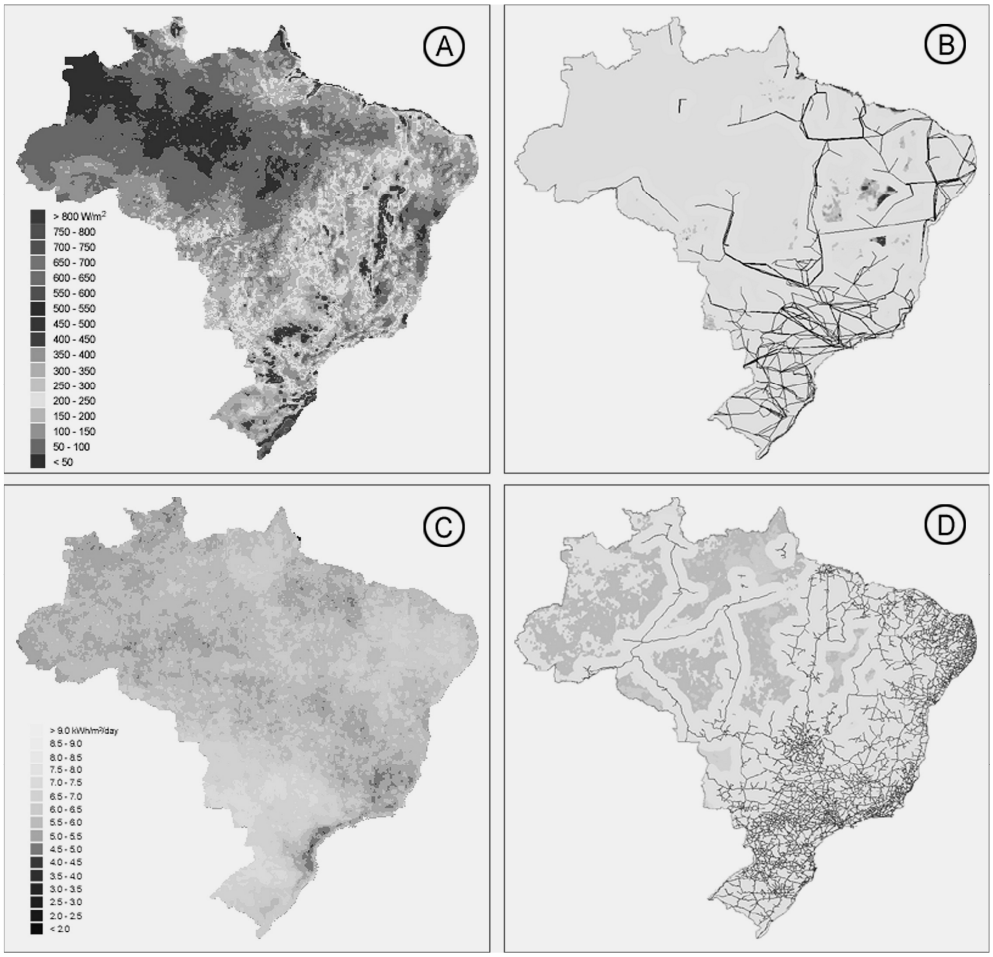

Figure 1. (A) Map of annual mean of the wind power density; (B) Output provided by GIS tool presenting areas distant more than 100km far from electricity transmission lines and with wind power density larger than 200W/m^2; (C) global solar irradiance map for November 2000; and (D) Output provided by GIS tool presenting areas distant more than 100km from major Brazilian highways and having solar irradiation larger then 5.5kWh/m^2/day

3. SONDA PROJECT

The "Sistema de Organização Nacional de Dados Ambientais para o setor de energia" (Brazilian Depository System of Environmental Data for the energy sector) project is chiefly linked to the climatic area but is strongly oriented towards providing adequate support to activities in the area of renewable energy, chiefly in the assessment of the solar and wind energy resources. The CPTEC/INPE devised the project to help the government in supporting and evaluating the multiple actions of renewable energy resources assessments in Brazil, such as that of SWERA. It has been granted by FINEP (Brazilian National Foundation for Project Development) in 2001.

The project aims at providing the country with a basic network of high quality reliable and integrated ground data acquisition sites for ground-truth in satellite and models derived assessment of solar and wind energy. Besides that, the database provided by SONDA network will provide capacity building for the study of climate impacts on solar and energy resources (variability, uncertainty, trends, regional and microclimate, manmade effects, etc.) and will build up human resources through technical training and formal academic activities such as those leading to MSc. and PhD.

Figure 2 shows the location map of all measurement sites. Table 2 presents a brief description of these locations. The sites are divided into 4 different classes: (a) reference sites, (b) complete solar sites, (c) basic solar sites and (d) aeolic sites. Table 3 presents the minimum equipment set up for each site category.

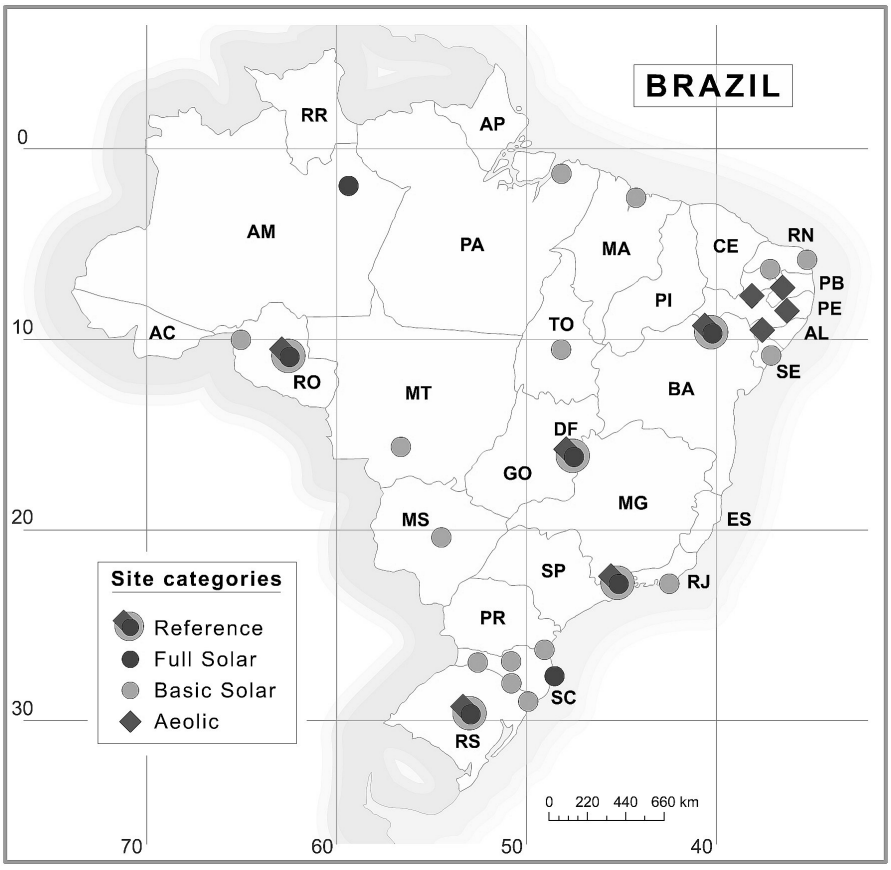

Figure 2. Location of all measurement sites of SONDA network

Five reference sites are planned to be part of the network. Their locations were chosen to represent the major climatic areas of Brazil: the Northeast, the Amazon, the central plateau, and the South. Four of them are in operation now and one is yet to be installed. The data provided by these reference data will be used to validate satellite models developed to estimate renewable energy resources, mainly solar and wind energy.

Table 2. Basic information of all SONDA measurement sites

Category	Site Location	ID	Latitude	Longitude	Altitude (m)	Situation
Reference	Brasília/DF	BRB	15°36" S	47°42' O	1023	in operation since 06/2004
	São Martinho da Serra/RS	SMS	29°26" S	53°49' O	489	in operation since 01/2004
	Ouro Preto d'Oeste/RO	OPO	10°52' S	61°58' O	200	in operation since 07/2004
	Petrolina/PE	PTR	09°04' S	40°19' O	387	in operation since 07/2004
	Cachoeira Paulista/SP	CPA	22°39' S	45°00' O	574	projected
Full Solar	Florianópolis/SC	FLN	27° 36' S	48°30' O	12	in operation since 01/2004
	Balbina /AM	BAB	01°55' S	59°25' O	230	in operation
Basic Solar	Aracaju/SE	AJU	10°54' S	37°04' O	4	projected
	Caicó /RN	CAI	06°28' S	37°05' O	176	in operation
	Campo Grande/MS	CGR	20°26' S	54°32' O	677	in operation since 01/2004
	Campos Novos/SC	CPN	not allocated	not allocated	not available	in project
	Chapecó/SC	XAP	27°04' S	52°36' O	700	in test
	Cuiabá/MT	CBA	15°33' S	56°04' O	185	in operation since 01/2004
	Joinville/SC	JOI	26°15' S	48°51' O	48	in operation since 05/2004
	Lebon Regis/SC	LEB	26°59' S	50°42' O	1036	in operation since 05/2004
	Palmas/TO	PMA	10°10' S	48°21' O	216	projected
	São Luiz/MA	SLZ	02°35' S	44°12' O	40	projected
	Sombrio/SC	SBR	29°05' S	49°48' O	15	in test
	Belém/PA	BEL	01°28' S	48°27' O		in project
	Natal/RN	NAT	05°50' S	35°12' O	50	in project
	Nova Mamoré/RO	NOM	10°18' S	65°11' O	91	in project
	Região dos Lagos/RJ		not allocated	not allocated	not available	in project
Aeolic	Piranhas/PE	PIR	9° 37' S	37° 46' O	203	in test
	Belo Jardim/PE	BJD	8° 22' S	36° 25' O	718	in test
	Triunfo/PE	TRI	7° 49' S	38° 07' O	1123	in test
	São João do Cariri/PB	SCR	7° 22' S	36° 31' O	486	in test

The two sites in Full Solar category in operation are part of “Baseline Solar Radiation Network”. They provide ground measurements of global, diffuse and direct solar radiation; photosynthetic active radiation (PAR); illuminance (LUX) data; and basic meteorological data (temperature, pressure, humidity and precipitation). These sites are submitted to strict procedures of standardization, maintenance and data qualification to accomplish the requirements of the BSRN network. Their high quality data will be very useful to validate radiative transfer models used to estimate solar irradiation at surface. The Basic Solar sites will be helpful to validate radiative transfer models in special atmospheric and environmental conditions like those encountered in Northeast or

Amazon region where persistent clear or cloud sky, respectively, make difficult to get cloud cover index from satellite data.

Table 3. Minimum setup for each site category in SONDA network

Sensors	Site Category			
	Reference	Full Solar	Basic Solar	Aeolic
Solar Photometer	X			
Sky Imager	X			
Solar Tracker	X	X		
Global Irradiation	X	X	X	
Diffuse	X	X	X	
Direct	X	X		
Long Wave	X	X		
PAR	X	X	X	
LUX	X	X	X	
Temperature	X	X	X	
Relative Humidity	X	X	X	
Pressure	X	X	X	
Rain Gauge	X	X	X	
Anemometer at 10m	X	X	X	
Anemometer at 25m	X			X
Anemometer at 50m	X			X
Temperature at 1m	X			
Temperature at 25m	X			X
Temperature at 50m	X			X

The aeolic site category aims at providing wind data to be used in comparisons with climate models and validate wind maps. They consist of vertical towers of 50m eight, with first grade wind (speed and direction) and temperature meters at 25m and 50m, along with data logger and data transmission system. Similar instruments are installed in the five “reference sites”. Wind data are acquired every second and averaged for 10minutes: the maximum and minimum wind velocity are also calculated and provided for each 10-minutes interval.

All data are received in the base data collection facility located at CPTEC, in Cachoeira Paulista. The qualified ground measurements database generated by whole SONDA network will be archived following specific procedures to provide control quality and reliability. The archive database will be available for public access by several media (website, ftp, CD, or other required media).

4. CONCLUSIONS

Both SWERA and SONDA projects in development under CPTEC/INPE coordination aims at providing reliable and high quality information to decision makers, investors and stakeholders for facilitating clean energy development in Brazil. It is the first time that such a great amount of reliable information and high quality ground data will be put together to produce and disseminate free of charge a complete image of the solar and wind energy resources in Brazil and South America. The SWERA and SONDA databases will also allow for a better understanding on how renewable energy and

climate are related to each other in Brazil, and how climate changes would impact on these renewable energy resources.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The SWERA project was possible thanks to the UNEP/GEF (GFL-232827214364-SWERA). The SONDA project was possible thanks to the FINEP (22.01.0569.00). Thanks are due to Silvia V. Pereira, Cristina Yamashita, Sheila A. B. Silva, Hugo Corrá, Rafael Chagas, Chou Sin Chan and Mariza P. Echer. The institutional acknowledgment is due to CPTEC/INPE and LABSOLAR/UFSC. The author was supported by a grant from CNPq (No. 381072/2002-9).

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